**SWAMI RAMANAND TEERTH MARATHWADA UNIVERSITY, NANDED**

## A Doctoral Resume

# A CRITICAL STUDY OF MAJOR THEMES IN KAZUO ISHIGURO'S SELECT NOVELS

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## I. INTRODUCTION:

Kazuo Ishiguro is a Japan born contemporary British author who has recently received the most prestigious Nobel Prize in Literature for 2017. Memory, emotion, time past and present are important signposts in Kazuo Ishiguro's landscape.

The novels of Kazuo Ishiguro are full of various human emotions. He states, "I'm trying to work largely through emotions. I'm just trying to say to readers: 'Do you think this is how it feels? I think this is how it must feel, to be a person in this kind of situation – do you recognise this?' And although it's a modest ambition, I think it's quite important that people communicate with each other at that level. To say: 'I think this is what life is like – do you share these feelings? If I put it like this, do you feel those emotions as well?"[1] Human psychology plays important role in his writing be it memory of past which is illusion at the present time. The characters are trying to find out their self-identity. Etsuko rebuilds the past in *A Pale View of Hills*, she also discloses her unwillingness to either fully remember or disclose the occurrences of her past life. In *The Remains of the Day* like Etsuko, Stevens also significantly appraises the function of his memory with the idea that he implies that such articulation of awareness may reveal truth's indistinctness. Likewise, the narrator of *An Artist of the Floating World* Masuji Ono interrupts his story with remarks that any reconstructed narrative may be mistaken representation. His narrative, in this continued fabrication, becomes a self-acknowledged account comprised as much from forgetfulness as recollection. And Etsuko herself observe how memory can be an unreliable thing as she struggles for correspondence in recalling what she might have felt or experienced in the turbulent period with what actual memory produces. In *When We Were Orphans* also, Banks dwells on his

recollections and things thought forgotten, which are carefully dredged up and the novel portrayed that Banks was cautiously recounting his life-story in terms of his fragile memory in order to identify who he really was. In *Never Let Me Go*, Kathy begins to identify small but strange turning points that might have prompted awareness of their conditions as her memories are reworked in the present conditions. For each central character, remembering offers a catharsis through which they can solve their past and they find tranquility in the present because they have an opportunity in future.

*The Buried Giant*, the novel by Kazuo Ishiguro depicts ogres and dragons. His earlier novel *Never Let Me Go* has the sci-fi-touch, a look at cloning for medical reasons that's more subtle but no less horrendous. Born in Japan and brought up in London, Ishiguro's novels were expressed by the Nobel Foundation as uncovering "the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world". *Never Let Me Go* was said to introduce a cold undercurrent of science fiction into his work while *The Buried Giant* explores how "memory relates to oblivion, history to the present, and fantasy to reality".

*When We Were Orphans* and *Never Let Me Go* in particular observes the ways in which subjugation and dislocation themes frequently mentioned in Ishiguro's earlier works, are represented with increasing superiority and complexity in these novels. Subjugation and dislocation plague the narrators of Ishiguro's four previous books. In *When We Were Orphans* and *Never Let Me Go*, these two conditions control not only the narrators, but their supporting characters, the novels' settings, and the way a reader understand each story.

**Life and Works of Kazuo Ishiguro:**

Kazuo Ishiguro was born on 8$^{th}$ November 1954 in Nagasaki, Japan. His father Shizuo Ishiguro and mother Shizuko moved to Guildford, Surry, England when he was just five years old. He went Stoughton Primary School and then Woking County Grammar School in

Surrey. In 1974, he started studies at the University of Kent at Canterbury, graduating in 1978 with a Bachelor of Arts (honours) in English and Philosophy. He completed a Master of Arts in Creative Writing in 1980. He turned out to be a British citizen in 1983. Ishiguro has been married to Lorna MacDougall, a social worker, since 1986.

He has written seven outstanding novels those are *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986) The Remains of the Day (1989), *The Unconsloed* (1995), *When We Were Orphans* (2000), *Never Let Me Go* (2005) and *The Buried Giant* (2015).

He has written screenplays *A Profile of Arthur J. Mason* (Television film for Channel 4) (1984), *The Gourmet* (Television film for Channel 4) (1987), *The Saddest Music in the World* (2003), *The White Countess* (2005).

He has also written some short fictions and lyrics. Two of his novels are filmed. He is winner of numerous awards. Kazuo Ishiguro is recipient the most soft after Nobel Prize in Literature for 2017. Some of his other notable awards are 1982: Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize for *A Pale View of Hills*' 1983: Published in the Granta Best Young British Novelists issue' 1986: Whitbread Prize for *An Artist of the Floating World*' 1989: Booker Prize for *The Remains of the Day*' 1993: Published in the Granta Best Young British Novelists issue' 1995: Officer of the Order of the British Empire' 1998: Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres' 2005: *Never Let Me Go* named on *Time* magazine's list of the 100 greatest English language novels since the magazine's formation in 1923, 2008: *The Times* ranked Ishiguro 32nd on their list of "The 50 Greatest British Writers Since 1945".

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Many critics and researchers have interpreted, and evaluated Kazuo Ishiguro's novels differently, from the publication of his very first novel. It is necessary to make a survey of that relevant literature in the present research study. They are as follows.

- Eva Katalin Szederkenyi, *Gaps And Silences In Re-Interpreting the Past of Kazuo Ishiguro's Narrative Techniques In His Early Novels,* Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Pazmany Peter Catholic University, Doctoral School of Literary Studies

- Wai-chew Sim, *Globalisation and Dislocation in the novels of Kazuo Ishiguro,* The University of Warwik, Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies.

- C.Lalrinfeli Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of English, Mizoram University (India), *A Study of Memory and Identity In Select Works By Kazuo Ishiguro.*

- Kazuo Ishiguro's works have been explored by different critics with different aspects.

But no serious research seems to be carried out by any researcher on selected topic till date.

## III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present research work attempts to achieve the following aims and objectives.

- To analyze various major themes of Kazuo Ishiguro's novels.

- To study Kazuo Ishiguro's narrative technique.

- To discover the psychological treatment in Kazuo Ishiguro's novels.

- To study the impact of domestic problems and globalization in Kazuo Ishiguro's novels

- To find out how emotion plays important role in Kazuo Ishiguro's novels.

- To focus the impact of past on the characters in Kazuo Ishiguro's novels

## IV. HYPOTHESIS:

The present study is based on the following hypothesis:

- The thematic dimensions of Kazuo Ishiguro's writings are based on his different personal experiences.
- Kazuo Ishiguro's all seven novels are spirit of his way of thinking about life and his writing
- Kazuo Ishiguro's all seven novels are strongly based on emotions which has greater impact on his character.
- The past plays important role in Kazuo Ishiguro's personal life and his writings.
- Like a true universal figure Kazuo Ishiguro's themes of writing are local, global and noble.

## V. RESEARCH PLAN- A CTITICAL STUDY OF MAJOR THEMES IN KAZUO ISHIGURO'S SELECT NOVELS:

Here we are going to study major themes in Kazuo Ishiguro's select novels. His novels comprise various human emotions. Such as human psychology, memory of past, search for self-identity, memory relates to oblivion, history to present and fantasy to reality, subjugation and dislocation. There are some undercurrents of science fiction in Kazuo Ishiguro's work.

In *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), Etsuko is the main character of the novel from Japan. At present she is staying in the England. She concerns her daughter Niki and her first daughter Keiko. Keiko committed suicide. The story of named Schiko and her daughter Mariko plays a vital role in the novel. The present condition and the memory of the past create a trap of regret and guilt. *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986) is the second novel of Kazuo Ishiguro which set in Japan three years after the end of the Second World War. The novel is narrated by Masuji Ono who was a respected artist before and during the war. At the

present, he is retired. He spends his day by gardening and repairing his large, crumbling house. *The Remains of the Day* (1989) is the third novel by Kazuo Ishiguro. Mr. Stevens is a butler at an English Stately Home. As the novel opens in the summer of 1956, he is set to take on a motoring trip to visit Miss Kenton, a housekeeper who left 20 years earlier to get married.

*The Unconsoled* (1995) is the fourth by Kazuo Ishiguro. The novel takes place over a period of three days. It is about Ryder, a famous pianist who arrives in a central European city to perform a concert. He is entangled in a web of appointments and promises which he cannot seem to remember, struggling to fulfill his commitments before Thursday night's performance, frustrated with his inability to take control. *When We Were Orphans* (2000) is the fifth novel of the author. Christopher Bank is a English boy who born in early twentieth-century in Shanghai. When he was of nine years of old his mother and father vanish under suspicious circumstances. He was sent to live in England. He grows up and become a renowned detective. More than twenty years later, he comes back to Shanghai where Sino-Japanese War is raging, to solve the mystery of the disappearances. *Never Let Me Go* (2005) is the sixth novel by Kazuo Ishiguro. The novel moves around three Hailsham students: Kathy, and two others, Ruth and Tommy, who develop a close but complicated friendship. Kathy develops a fondness for Tommy, looking after him when he is bullied and having private talks with him. However, Ruth and Tommy begin a romantic relationship during their time at the school that continues when they leave.

*The Buried Giant* (2015) is the seventh novel by Kazuo Ishiguro. The novel is set soon after Arthurian Britain, with "Britons" living along with Saxons. The story starts with Axl and Beatrice, an elderly (Christian) Briton married couple living in a communal agrarian village somewhat like a warren, partially carved into the hillside. Their love is noticeable and Axl always call to Beatrice as "princess". Although Axl and Beatrice are accepted within the

community and state they are still able to complete the tasks assigned them, they are of low social status (children taunt them, and the community takes away and forbids the couple's candle, forcing them to spend their nights in the dark). Axl observes that people seem to have a general problem with memory: he is unable to recall a kindly red-haired woman who has vanished from the community, and observes the townsfolk forget about a missing child, Marta, they had been frantically searching for.

## VI. TENTATIVE CHAPTER SCHEME:

This research tentatively proposes to follow the chapter scheme given below.

Preface and Acknowledgement

**Chapter I: Introduction**

**Chapter II: Memory and Identity**

**Chapter III: Subjugation and Dislocation**

**Chapter IV: Class, Culture and History**

**Chapter V: Undercurrent of Science Fiction**

**Chapter VI: Conclusion**

**A Select Bibliography**

The first chapter will be dedicated to the survey of contemporary British novels and Kazuo Ishiguro's place in it, brief reviews of literature, significance of study, aims and objectives, scope and limitations of the study, the research methodology.

This second chapter will cover a sense of memory, identity, nostalgia and mourning in Kazuo Ishiguro’s novels. This study examines the importance of memory, identity and its representation in Ishiguro's novels, as well as theories on mourning, trauma and memory by Sigmund Freud.

The focus of third chapter would be the way in which subjugation and dislocation themes are frequently cited in Kazuo Ishiguro's earlier works are signified with raising sophistication and complication.

The fourth chapter will deal complex relationships with wider historical events shaking the world. Kazuo Ishiguro's novels are not attempts to render the past convincingly, but rather to pursue how individuals interpret and (re)construct their lives through history. Kazuo Ishiguro became a British citizen in 1982 but his approach to the language and the culture remains that if not of an outsider than certainly a specialist.

The fifth chapter will study the elements of science fiction that asks deep ethical questions in Kazuo Ishiguro's novels.

The last chapter would conclude the analysis, interpretation and evaluation made in the erlier chapters. Finally, a concluding statement on the literary significance of Kazuo Ishiguro's novels in the contemporary ideological and post – colonial context would be made in last chapter.

## VII. RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY TO SOCIETY:

Serious novelists like Kazuo Ishiguro, do our deep thinking for us, and find ways to communicate big questions within stories so compelling that readers absorb them without having to try. He described the themes he has spent his life thinking about and painstakingly unpicking, the way countries and nations and communities remember their past, and how often they bury the uncomfortable memories from their past. That's why the Swedish Academy while awarding the Noble Prize in Literature to Kazuo Ishiguro said he produced novels of "great emotional force". It added that they "uncovered the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world."

## VIII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The present study intends to use the sociological, historical, political, and cultural methodologies to interpret Kazuo Ishiguro's select the novels o. At times deconstructionist and socio-psychological approaches would also be used. Interviews of author and eminent scholars in this area would also be taken. Finally, the general findings and inferences would be put forth. MLA recent methodology (MLA Style-sheet 8th edition) will be strictly followed for documentation

## IX. PROBABLE DATE OF COMPLETION OF WORK:

The present research work would probably be completed within three years from the date of registration.

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